Succeeding in your future postdoc: How to find a postdoc, how to enjoy it, and how to plan your career

Thalyana Stathis, PhD
Manager, Office of Career and Professional Development for PhD Students and Postdocs at MSKCC, a cancer research institute in NYC

stathist@mskcc.org
https://www.linkedin.com/in/thalyanasmithvikos/
*disclaimer: my own thoughts and opinions
Thalyana’s perspective on giving career advice to PhDs and postdocs

Workshops and Courses

We offer more than 50 workshops and courses per year to help trainees build the skills they need to be successful scientists. Topics change regularly to reflect the needs of the postdoc population.

Recent workshops and courses include:

Career Exploration Events

- Roundtable networking events with MSK alumni who have transitioned into exciting careers
- Webinars that explore career options outside of New York City
- The Annual Tri-I Career Symposium
- Site visits to companies that regularly hire our postdocs and students
- Academic Job Search Bootcamp

Professional Development Workshops

- Funding for postdoc research
- Communicating science to a lay audience
- Networking for scientists
- Time and project management
- Leadership for scientists
- Introduction to undergraduate science teaching
- Transitioning to research independence
- Mock chalk talks
- Nonacademic job searches
- Interviewing and negotiating basics
- Converting a CV into a resume

Scientific Skill-Building Classes

- Animal models of cancer
- Differential gene expression analysis with R
- Image handling and analysis
- Best practices in programming for reproducibility in science
- Intro to proteomics
- Foundations of Data Science
- Flow cytometry from basics to multicolor and multichannel

Training to be successful during your PhD/postdoc
Navigate any challenges during your PhD/postdoc
Plan your career after your PhD/postdoc
Develop skills to help you succeed in future career
universal themes
Thalyana’s perspective on giving career advice to PhDs and postdocs

- PhD
  - Yale
  - 2014

- Coordinator
  - Columbia Graduate School
  - 2015

- Manager
  - MSKCC Career & Prof Dev
  - 2018

- 2014
  - Journal Editor
  - Springer Nature

- 2017
  - Assistant Dean
  - Columbia Graduate School
Today’s Topics

Why and how to consider doing a postdoc as part of your career
Research opportunities at MSKCC and in NYC
Types of career options after your postdoc
Finding postdoc opportunities
Applying for a postdoc and how to be a strong candidate
Choosing a postdoc advisor and lab
Learning about important resources at an institution (examples from MSKCC)
Utilizing supportive networks during your postdoc
Being productive and achieving your learning goals during your postdoc
Launching your career after your postdoc
Today’s Topics
For PhD Students, Postdocs
Junior Faculty: interviewing candidates and mentoring postdocs

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Being productive and achieving your learning goals during your postdoc
Launching your career after your postdoc
After today’s session

- Slides
- More information about research opportunities at MSKCC, how to navigate our website, how to get in touch
Why and how to consider doing a postdoc as part of your career
What is a postdoc?

- An individual holding a doctoral level degree who is engaged in a temporary period of mentored research and/or scholarly training for the purpose of acquiring the professional skills needed to pursue a career path of his or her choosing. Definition from the National Postdoctoral Association
Considerations for doing a postdoc after the PhD

• A training period for a future faculty career, and other research careers
You know how to conduct research in your PhD field; now:
Continuing to gain new expertise
Preparing to lead a research program and lab members

• What new field would you like to explore (likely closer to the work you will do as a faculty member)? Interdisciplinary research with PhD?
Similar research area with new techniques? (ex. cancer genomics, model organisms)
Different research area with same techniques? (ex. bioinformatics, genetics to pathology)
Different research area and new techniques?

• What new skills would you like to learn and new environment to work in?
Opportunities to publish (first, co-author, review), present, and write grants
Opportunities to design projects independently
Opportunities to collaborate with labs in other fields
Opportunities to mentor other researchers

• Try a different lab culture from your PhD lab – there are pros and cons to big and small labs, and to working with junior and senior faculty members, so try out both!
Successful postdocs Thalyana has worked with

• It’s not just about having a good publication record!
• A collaborative spirit for your science and for your career development
• Be open to “networking” (forming relationships) with a wide variety of people in different environments, and always be ready to promote yourself
• Rely on your network for mentorship, support, guidance, and an expanded network
New environment to work in during your postdoc

• Research is an international enterprise and benefits from large networks and collaborations
• Becoming familiar with different research approaches, teams, communication styles, and collaboration methods is key
• Studies on the career benefits of an international research exchange during PhD or for postdoc
• Some of MSK’s international postdocs did a research exchange or internship through their PhD program before coming back to MSK for a postdoc in another lab
Your postdoc strategy: an international experience?
Research opportunities at MSKCC and in NYC
Local NYC Activities

Memorial Sloan Kettering is located on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. The surrounding neighborhood is filled with restaurants, coffee houses, and other businesses that cater to the many students and faculty of the three academic institutions in the immediate vicinity: MSK, Rockefeller, and Weill Cornell. Our campus is only a few blocks from Central Park, which offers miles of bicycling and running trails, tennis courts, skating rinks, outdoor concerts, and more.

The MSK campus also borders the East River Park Promenade, which features a bicycling, running, and skating path with breathtaking views of the East River and the many bridges that connect Manhattan to Queens, the Bronx, and Brooklyn.

We are also in walking distance of many world-renowned museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Neue Gallery, the Guggenheim Museum, El Museo del Barrio, the Asia Society, and more.

Beyond that, the rest of New York’s five boroughs are but a subway ride away. Within just a few square miles, you’ll have access to some of the best theater, music, food, and sports to be found anywhere. New York City truly has something for everyone.

Science and the City

With its vast academic, clinical, pharmaceutical, and financial resources, New York City is one of the most exhilarating places to prepare for a future at the leading edge of scientific research. We encourage trainees to take advantage of the City’s educational and biotechnology resources.

The New York Academy of Sciences opens its doors to postdocs for a wide range of events, and also sponsors the professional development programs of the Science Alliance. In addition, you can attend roundtables and workshops offered by the NewYorkBIO, a not-for-profit committed to the development of New York’s biotechnology industry.

Scientific collaborations are common at Memorial Sloan Kettering and throughout New York City. The National Institutes of Health is currently funding the New York Consortium on Membrane Protein Structure, a collaboration that brings together structural biologists to explore sequence-structure relationships for human membrane proteins and study membrane proteins associated with diabetes and other metabolic diseases.

In addition, New York-area charitable foundations contribute millions of dollars in grants annually to healthcare-related projects. For example, the Tri-
Welcome to Sloan Kettering Institute

The Sloan Kettering Institute (SKI) is the experimental research arm of Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. Discoveries made in SKI labs are an important driver of clinical progress at MSK and beyond. Our research spans nine program areas:

- Cancer Biology & Genetics
- Cell Biology
- Chemical Biology
- Computational & Systems Biology
- Developmental Biology
- Immunology
- Molecular Biology
- Molecular Pharmacology
- Structural Biology

• MSK IMPACT: whole genome sequencing of cancer patients
• Immunotherapy for cancer treatment
• Neuroscience of patients
• Infectious diseases of patients
• Stem cells, epigenetics, epidemiology, and more…
Consider research hospitals or medical centers if interested in translational and clinical research.

Memorial Hospital Research Laboratories

Within Memorial Hospital, many scientists lead research laboratories, including some physician-scientists who apply insights from the clinic to their laboratory work. Our investigators conduct research ranging from analyzing genetic changes in patient tumor samples to developing new imaging techniques to studying the best ways to optimize radiation therapy delivery.

Learn more about our investigators who head basic and translational research laboratories within Memorial Hospital.
Top cancer research hospitals in US

University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center
MSKCC
Mayo Clinic
Dana-Farber Cancer Center
Cleveland Clinic
Johns Hopkins Hospital
Northwestern Memorial Hospital
Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, Los Angeles
University of Pennsylvania
Moffitt Cancer Center
Another approach: teaching opportunities for postdoc/faculty career in NYC

Explore Types of Teaching Institutions – Carnegie Classifications of Institutions of Higher Ed
Your postdoc strategy:
Types of career options after your postdoc
Successful postdocs Thalyana has worked with

- It’s not just about having a good publication record!
- An understanding of career goals after training period:
  For interest in academic faculty jobs, discuss with mentor about how you will establish your own niche within the field
  For interest in industry or other jobs, work in a lab where mentor is supportive of any career path
- Always find ways to learn new technical skills and soft skills important for any job: leading projects, mentoring junior scientists, working collaboratively in teams, communicating research in different formats to different audiences
  → interpret potential for this during the interview
Postdocs have many career options
What to do right now?

1. Self-Assessment
2. Exploration
3. Skills and Networking
4. Job Search
Science Careers’
My Individual Development Plan (myIDP) survey

http://myidp.sciencecareers.org/
Science Careers’ My Individual Development Plan (myIDP) survey

- This survey is required if your PhD was awarded in the US
- As a postdoc, it is an optional but useful document that you can use to help set and accomplish career goals
- Narrow down your options by utilizing career office resources
Values: What is important to you?

Location  Salary  Balance  Travel  Challenge  Team
**Career Path**

**Sales and marketing of science-related products:**
- Medical science liaison; technical sales representative; marketing specialist

**Science policy:**
- Public affairs/government affairs staff at scientific societies, foundations, government entities, or think tanks

**Science education for non-scientists:**
- Education or public outreach specialist such as at a science museum or scientific society

**Intellectual property:**
- Patent agent; patent attorney; technology transfer specialist

**Research administration:**
- Research administrator in private or public research institutions, government or academia, including compliance officers, grants and contracts officers; dean or director of research programs

**Business of science:**
- Management consultant; business development professional in a biotech company; venture capitalist; market researcher; investment analyst

**Clinical research management:**
- Clinical research project/trials manager or coordinator

**Drug/device approval and production:**
- Regulatory affairs professional; quality control specialist

**Public health related careers:**
- Public health program analyst or evaluator; epidemiologist; biostatistician; medical informaticist

**Support of science-related products:**
- Technical support specialist; field application specialist; product development scientist or engineer

**Entrepreneurship:**
- Starting your own business

**Science writing:**
- Science, medical, or technical writer or journalist; science editor; science publisher

**Scientific/medical testing:**
- Testing specialist in an environmental, public health, genetics, or forensic science setting (intelligence agencies, federal/state departments of justice); clinical diagnostician

**Teaching-intensive careers in academia:**
- A primarily teaching faculty position in a research university, liberal arts college, community college

**Science education for K-12 schools:**
- Classroom teacher; curriculum developer; science specialist
Industry career options beyond scientist

R&D non-Bench
- R&D Project Management
- BD and Alliance
- BD in-license
- Regulatory
- Clinical
- Legal/patent

Operations
- Manufacturing
- Quality Assurance
- Quality Control
- Supply Chain
- Operational Excellence
- Logistics
- Supply Chain Management
- Operational Excellence
- Logistics

Commercial
- Marketing
- Sales Rep
- Portfolio Management
- BD / M&A
- Product Manager
- Account Manager

Medical
- Medical Writer
- Medical Science Liaison
- Pharmacovigilance
- Drug Safety

R&D
- Sales & Marketing
Other common careers outside of industry

- Equity Research
- Consulting
- Law
- Non-profit
- Teaching
- Publishing
- Medical Communications
MSK postdocs move on to exciting and varied scientific careers, and we are thrilled to provide a foundation from which they can make their transition. The Office of Career & Professional Development offers one-on-one advice as well as a suite of courses and trainings to be responsive to the careers MSK postdocs choose.
Your postdoc strategy:
Types of career options after your postdoc
(Is a postdoc always necessary?)
Germany → postdoc at MSKCC → exciting career path

Benedikt Bosbach
Senior Principal Scientist
Pfizer, NYC
Postdoc required for higher role

Gesa Junge
Senior Patent Technical Advisor
Cooley LLP, NYC
Postdoc not required

Bastian Zimmer
Group Leader
Evotec, Hamburg
Postdoc required for higher role

Susanne Kossatz
Assistant Professor
Technical University of Munich
Postdoc required (did two)

Josef Leibold
Group Leader
University of Tubingen
Postdoc required

Wilhelm Palm
Group Leader, DKFZ
Postdoc required
Advice on applying for postdoc jobs
Finding postdoc opportunities
Typical ways to apply to postdoc positions

• Discuss with your current advisor and other faculty mentors about research interests and options for postdoc labs
• Contact faculty of interest via email, introduce yourself, and ask about any potential postdoc opportunities (if you don’t see any job opportunities on website, still ask)
• How to make sure your email is read?
  Explain any connections: met at an (online) conference
  Your network of faculty mentors may suggest people to contact
  - send a follow-up email or make a phone call
If your network is unfamiliar with this lab
  - still send a follow-up email!
• Potential results: not hiring now but colleague is hiring
Postdoctoral Opportunities

Postdoctoral research training positions are available on an ongoing basis across Memorial Sloan Kettering’s 200-plus research laboratories. To apply for a postdoc position, email your CV to the lab head whose research focus matches your area of interest. Please include a customized cover letter describing your background and career objectives.

Find a Postdoc Position

Browse by area of interest:

- Find a lab by research topic

Browse labs that are actively recruiting:

- Select...
Finding postdoc job postings on lab website or on jobs portals

Postdoctoral, Graduate Student, & Technician Positions

Positions are available for postdoctoral fellows, graduate students, and technicians in the research group of Dr. Xiaolan Zhao. We integrate multidisciplinary approaches to study genome maintenance processes that are linked to tumorigenesis, viral infection, and genome instability syndromes. Current focuses of the lab include investigations into i) genome replication, ii) homologous recombination and genetic alterations, iii) SUMO- and checkpoint-mediated DNA damage response, and iv) Smc5/6-mediated chromosomal functions.

The broad research scope provides lab members ample opportunities to explore and discover new principles within each subfield and at their interfaces. The Zhao lab is a leader in the above research areas and provides an excellent research environment. Training and mentoring are provided at multiple levels, such as advancing research abilities, grant writing skills and leadership qualities. Former lab members have thrived, going on to establish independent research groups and attaining leadership positions in companies and non-profit organizations. We are looking for candidates with a passion for science and motivated to make impactful discoveries in a collaborative and fun environment to join us.

MSK is well known for its world-famous cancer hospital and outstanding biological research. We are located in the upper east side of Manhattan, within a vibrant community also comprising the Rockefeller University and Cornell Medical School. This tri-institutional area provides abundant collaborative, learning, and social opportunities and is the home to hundreds of US and international researchers and their families. New York City has a strong genome maintenance community that holds regular meetings and provides rich collaboration and career development opportunities. It is also a one-of-the-kind place to live and to experience world culture and events.

The positions will remain open until filled but early applications are encouraged. Please send a brief cover letter describing your current and future research interests, CV, Expected availability date, and contact information of three references to Dr. Zhao at zhaox1@mskcc.org.

Mailing Address
Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center
430 E. 67th Street
RRL 917D
New York, NY 10065

Email
zhaox1@mskcc.org
Read their recent papers, and then ask what the lab is excited about now!
A specific project designed (perhaps already funded) → how much independence with project design later on in postdoc?
Applying for a postdoc and how to be a strong candidate
-be proactive and promote yourself!
Postdoctoral, Graduate Student, & Technician Positions

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New York, NY 10065

Email
zhaox1@mskcc.org
Strong application materials for a postdoc position

• “Expected availability date”
  When is the right time to look for a postdoc? Discussion with mentor and thesis committee
  6 months before PhD defense date?

• “Cover letter with current and future research interests”
  It’s all about why this lab is the perfect fit!
  Why are you interested in this research and this lab?
  What are you hoping to learn from the lab members?
  Your previous research shows evidence of productivity and what you can bring to the lab that is currently missing
Strong application materials for a postdoc position

• “Contact information of 3 references”
  Ask current or former faculty mentors who will write excellent letters discussing research accomplishments, future research interests and why this lab, career interests, impact on the field, leadership, collegiality
  Thesis advisor, thesis committee, director of PhD program
  Letter is missing? Have another faculty member in the department explain why they are writing letter instead

• “CV”
  Publications, presentations, honors/awards/fellowships/grants
  Publications show productivity and completing projects regardless of IF
  First author paper, perhaps co-author papers
  Using bioRxiv is encouraged!
  Discuss publication timeline with current mentor
Sections of a CV – Extrapolate from faculty application to postdoc application

- Contact Information
- Education
- Research Experience
- Publications
- Patents
- Grants/Fellowships/Honors/Awards

- Conference Presentations
- Teaching/Mentoring Experience
- Leadership and Service
- Professional Societies
- References
Salutations

- Address letter to hiring committee or committee chairperson (for postdoc positions, address letter to faculty member)

Opening Paragraph

- Why you are writing and how you heard about the position

I am writing to apply for the tenure-track assistant professor position... I am currently a postdoctoral fellow... I am excited about the prospect of joining your institution, known for... I am very excited about this opportunity, as I share your institution’s vision to...

My extensive research experience in... would fit well with your research efforts... I look forward to the possibility of working with... with the aim to... Your institution would provide an ideal home to successfully develop my research program by...
Formula for a cover letter (instead of research program, what do you want to learn during postdoc and career goals)

Middle Paragraphs

• Past accomplishments, impact of your work, and funding
• Briefly describe future directions
• Highlight fit for program

As a postdoctoral fellow, I have developed... (cite paper). I have successfully secured extramural funding through...

My postdoctoral training has focused on... As a PhD student, I...

As a junior faculty member, I aim to develop my research program by building on my recently published work... My three main research aims to continue this work are:
Formula for a cover letter (instead of this institution, what could you contribute to this lab)

Closing Paragraph

• Why do you want to apply to this institution
• Point to attached documents
• Thank hiring committee for consideration

I believe that my work would contribute to your institution’s goals of... especially...
I have enclosed my curriculum vitae with names of references and my research statement. Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you.
Reference Letters Content (their thoughts on your potential during postdoc and throughout your career)

- Their expertise; focus of their lab
- How long they have known you; your relationship history
- They have observed you excelling in your career; you are an outstanding researcher and are on your way to being a future world leader in the field
- Your accomplishments in your PhD and postdoc
- In their expert opinion, you have a bright future ahead of you because you have high-impact, intriguing and solid research questions for your research program
- You are an outstanding candidate for this position and they are confident you will excel, and you will be a good fit for the institution and will be a good colleague to department members
Choosing a postdoc advisor and lab:

**Interview must include:**

Present thesis research seminar
One-on-one meetings with potential faculty mentor and each lab member (and small groups)
Can also contact lab alumni to ask questions
- gather lots of information to make informed decisions!
Questions to Ask Potential Groups

For the PI/faculty lead:

- How long do you anticipate being able to support this postdoctoral position financially (1 year? 2 years?)?
- Are you supportive of your postdocs applying for independent funding (fellowships, transition awards, etc...)?
- What is your management & mentoring style?
- What career paths have some of your past postdocs pursued?
- What resources are available in the department, college, or university to support me in my career & professional development?

(the lab should be well-funded, and applying for funding shouldn’t be a requirement but rather just practice for the future)
Questions to Ask Potential Groups

For graduate students and/or postdocs in the group you are considering:

- How have you found the environment here? Institutional, Departmental, research group?
- What should I know about how Dr. X interacts with his/her postdocs?

For former graduate students and/or postdocs in the group:

- How was Dr. X as a mentor?
- Did they assist and support you in your career transition?

(also ask neighboring labs if there aren’t many current/former students and postdocs in this lab to ask questions!)
Learning about important resources at an institution (examples from MSKCC)
Postdoctoral Training

MSK is a phenomenal place to continue your scientific training as a postdoc. Learn more about our community.

Postdoctoral researchers are the lifeblood of science at Memorial Sloan Kettering. They come from around the country — and the world — to deepen their scientific training and grow as independent scientists. At any one time, nearly 600 postdocs are doing research in MSK laboratories. The majority train in the 100-plus laboratories that make up the Sloan Kettering Institute. Others train in Memorial Hospital research laboratories, including the Human Oncology and Pathogenesis Program, which aims to bridge discoveries made in the laboratory with those made in the clinic.

Why Choose MSK?

Choosing MSK for your postdoc is a wise investment in your future. Among the benefits of training with us are:

- Excellent job prospects
- World-class science
- A vibrant city and community
- Career and professional development
- Housing and childcare
- Competitive compensation and benefits

Learn more about what sets MSK apart ➜
Housing and childcare
All incoming postdocs have access to low-cost housing options for a period of three years. For those who stay longer than three years, we offer assistance in securing independent housing. MSK postdocs have access to two daycare centers: one on Roosevelt Island and one in Manhattan. All postdocs have access to additional resources to help secure childcare.

Learn more about benefits ›

Competitive compensation and benefits
MSK postdocs receive a competitive salary as well as full medical, dental, and vision coverage for themselves and any eligible dependents.

Learn more about benefits ›
A postdoc is a training period that should last for a finite amount of time.

Promotion after 2-3 or 5-6 years(?)
Make sure that the institution’s postdoc office provides all of these benefits and more, including mental health resources.

Housing
All incoming postdocs PGY 0 through PGY4 have access to low-cost housing options for a period of three years. All housing is located within a short distance of research labs. At the end of MSK housing eligibility, we offer assistance in securing independent housing.

To begin the housing assignment process, the administrator of the lab that is hosting you must submit a written request to the Housing Office at least three months in advance of your arrival. Assignments are made based on the following criteria: application date, apartment type, affordability, family size, overall apartment availability, and institutional priorities.

If you have questions about the housing services we offer postdoctoral researchers, please call Residential Services at 212-639-7696 or 212-639-7697.

Medical Benefits
All MSK postdocs receive full medical, dental, and vision coverage for themselves and any eligible dependents. For Research Fellows and Research Scholars, three medical plans are available; all insurance expenses are covered by MSK. For Research Associates, additional medical plan options exist; Research Associates contribute a fractional amount toward their coverage.

Daycare Benefits
Postdocs with children under 4 may find a spot in an MSK-sponsored Bright Horizons Center on either Roosevelt Island or in Manhattan; selection process is based on a lottery system.

Additional Benefits for Research Scholars and Research Associates
Additional benefits available to Research Scholars include:

- 401(k) plans
- pre-tax commuter benefits

Research Associates receive the full MSK employee benefits package, including:

- 401(k) plans
- employer matching program
- pre-tax commuter benefits
- life insurance
- long-term disability

Vacation and Sick Time
Research Fellows and Research Scholars are generally allowed two to four weeks of paid leave per year.

Research Associates are eligible for 20 vacation days and 12 federal holidays per year and may bank a combined total of 26 vacation days. Research Associates also accrue one sick day per month, for up to a maximum of 72 sick days.

Parental Leave
Make sure that the institution has someone assigned to helping postdocs get visas

Become familiar with J-1 and H-1B visas

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**Make sure that the institution has someone assigned to helping postdocs get visas**

**Become familiar with J-1 and H-1B visas**

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### Immigration Services

Memorial Sloan Kettering provides assistance to postdoctoral researchers who require visa support.

Incoming MSK postdocs can reach out to the pertinent Immigration Services staff member with any questions regarding work-related immigration issues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visa Type</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J-1</td>
<td>Jose A. Bueno-Roca</td>
<td><a href="mailto:buenorj@mskcc.org">buenorj@mskcc.org</a></td>
<td>646-227-3197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H-1B and Other Visas</td>
<td>Victoria Vigiotti</td>
<td><a href="mailto:vigliotv@mskcc.org">vigliotv@mskcc.org</a></td>
<td>646-227-3655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Card/Permanent Residence</td>
<td>Adam S. Cohen</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cohenas@mskcc.org">cohenas@mskcc.org</a></td>
<td>646-227-3001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Types of Work Visas

Please see below for details on specific types of work visas.

If you need information on citizenship or family-sponsored immigration, or you would like general information about immigration, please visit the US Citizenship and Immigration Services website at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov).

#### Exchange Visitors (J-1)

MSK is authorized by the U.S. government to sponsor foreign nationals to come to the United States as Exchange Visitors in the “Research Scholar” category for temporary periods of stay (up to five years) to conduct research. The principal document indicating J-1 sponsorship is the Form DS-2019, which is issued by MSK’s Immigration Services department. Issuance of the DS-2019 is regulated by the U.S. Department of State. DS-2019 forms may only be issued when MSK’s Academic Administration Office approves academic appointments.

- **Two-Year Foreign Residency Requirement (212 (e))**: Some J-1 holders are subject to a two-year foreign residency requirement, called 212(e), which is a reference to the relevant statute, Immigration Act section 212(e). Unless they obtain a waiver, these individuals must return to their country of nationality or previous permanent residence for a period of two years following completion of the J-1 program before they are allowed to return to the United States. Individuals may be subject to the two-year foreign residency requirement for different reasons.

- **Dependent Work Authorization (J-2)**: Spouses and dependent children of J-1 holders enter the United States with J-2 status. J-2 holders are entitled to apply for work permission through U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. They can apply for this benefit using an I-765 form available at [USCIS.gov](http://www.uscis.gov).

#### Specialty Workers (H-1B)

This category is reserved for individuals who enter the United States to render services in specialty occupations, which are those that require at least a bachelor’s degree. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services administers the H-1B program. Individuals do not apply for H-1B status. H-1B is an employer-sponsored program so MSK’s Immigration Services Department will apply on your behalf as petitioner.

You will become the beneficiary of the petition. H-1B status can be valid for up to six years under normal circumstances, in increments no greater than three years. H-1B extensions beyond six years are possible, under certain circumstances, if you have met the original requirements of the petition.
Utilizing supportive networks during your postdoc – beyond the lab and research institution
Networking & skill development for careers of interest – keep doing this!
Networking & skill development for international researchers – diaspora groups

We empower researchers to build careers in Germany.
Being productive and achieving your learning goals during your postdoc
A postdoc is a training period that should last for a finite amount of time 2-3 or 5-6 years(?).
Career meetings with mentor should happen frequently and be required annually by the postdoc office → also take ownership of this.
Utilize the guidance provided by career development awards (even if you don’t apply for award)

NIH Pathway to Independence Award (Parent K99/R00 Independent Clinical Trial Not Allowed)

K99/R00 Career Transition Award/Research Transition Award
STARTING GRANTS

Are you a talented early-career scientist who has already produced excellent supervised work, is ready to work independently and shows potential to be a research leader? The ERC Starting Grant could be for you.

Who can apply?

Researchers of any nationality with 2-7 years of experience since completion of PhD (Extensions are possible under certain circumstances — see the latest ERC Work Programme), a scientific track record showing great promise and an excellent research proposal.
Important skills to develop, a timeline, and how

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Candidate’s Plan for Career Development/Training Activities During Award Period

- A systematic plan should be presented for obtaining the biomedical, behavioral, or clinical science background, research experience, and career development activities necessary to launch the stated independent research career. Describe current activities and how they relate to the candidate’s career development plans and career goals. Describe proposed activities, e.g., those that will lead to new and/or enhanced research skills and knowledge, as well as related skills such as grant-writing, communication, leadership, and laboratory management. The career development plan must be specifically tailored to meet the needs of the candidate and the goal of achieving independence as a researcher.

Describe how the skills and knowledge obtained during the mentored phase will enhance research productivity and facilitate the development of new approaches and directions for investigation. Describe how the career development plan will promote the candidate’s success and transition to scientific independence. Candidates must justify the need for the award, particularly the mentored (K99) phase, and must provide a convincing case that the proposed period of support (1-2 years as a mentored candidate followed by up to 3 years as an independent scientist) will substantially enhance his/her career and/or will allow the pursuit of a novel or promising approach to a particular research problem. Candidates should make clear why additional mentored career development are critical before transitioning to research independence and pursuit of the proposed independent phase research.

The candidate must describe a plan, including a timeline with milestones, for evaluation of his/her progress during the mentored phase and for the transition to the independent phase.
Make official or unofficial mentoring committees
Have a co-mentor if your project enters different expertise of lab

Mentor, Co-Mentor, Consultant, Collaborators Section

All instructions in the SF424 (R&R) Application Guide must be followed, with the following additional instructions:

**Plans and Statements of Mentor and Co-mentor(s)**

- The application must include a statement from the primary mentor that provides: 1) information on his/her research qualifications and previous experience as a research supervisor; 2) a plan describing the nature of the supervision and mentoring that will occur during the proposed K99 award period, including how the candidate’s scientific and professional independence will be promoted; 3) a description of the elements of the planned career development activities, including any formal course-work; 4) a plan for transitioning the candidate from the mentored phase to the independent phase of the award and a description of how the mentor will help the candidate achieve scientific independence from his/her mentor(s); 5) a statement identifying the components of the proposed research that the K99 applicant can take when he/she transitions to research independence and that can be part of his/her independent (R00) phase award; and 6) when appropriate, a statement affirming any resources and reagents that can be taken by the applicant to the independent phase of the award.

- The mentor should have sufficient independent research support to cover the costs of the proposed K99 research project in excess of the allowable costs of this award, and should state that needed costs will be covered. If funds are needed beyond what will be provided by the mentor, the source of additional funds should be identified and documented in a letter signed by the responsible individual.

- Similar information must be provided by all co-mentors. If more than one mentor is proposed, the respective areas of expertise, the responsibility of each, and the nature of the involvement with the candidate should be explicitly described. Co-mentors should describe clearly how they will coordinate with the primary mentor and the candidate to provide an integrated mentoring effort.

- The primary mentor must agree to write and provide annual evaluations of the candidate’s progress for the initial mentored phase as required in the annual progress report.

- The mentor must agree to assist the candidate in transitioning to an independent research position by guiding the candidate during the job search and negotiation process and by commenting on the R00 phase application.

- If the applicant is proposing to gain experience in a clinical trial as part of his or her research career development, the mentor or a member of the mentoring team must include a statement to document leadership of the clinical trial, and appropriate expertise to guide the applicant in any proposed clinical trials research experience.

**Letters of Support from Collaborators, Contributors and Consultants**

- Signed statements must be provided by all collaborators and/or consultants confirming their participation in the project and describing their specific roles. Unless also listed as senior/key personnel, collaborators and consultants do not need to provide their biographical sketches. However, information should be provided clearly documenting the appropriate expertise in the proposed areas of consulting/collaboration.

- Advisory committee members (if applicable): Signed statements must be provided by each member of the proposed advisory committee. These statements should confirm their participation, describe their specific roles, and document the expertise they will contribute. Unless also listed as senior/key personnel, these individuals do not need to provide their biographical sketches.
Launching your career after your postdoc:
Choosing a career
Preparing for career during postdoc
Germany → postdoc at MSKCC → exciting career path

Benedikt Bosbach
Senior Principal Scientist, Pfizer, NYC
MSK PhD research exchange
Mentored junior postdocs;
Now mentors Pfizer industry postdocs

Gesa Junge
Senior Patent Technical Advisor
Cooley LLP, NYC
Career networking events

Bastian Zimmer
Group Leader
Evotec, Hamburg
Co-mentor for interdisciplinary work

Susanne Kossatz
Assistant Professor
Technical University of Munich
K99 career grant

Josef Leibold
Group Leader
University of Tubingen
Collaborative clinical research

Wilhelm Palm
Group Leader, DKFZ
Leadership for Scientists (Leadership Academy!)
After today’s session

- Slides
- More information about research opportunities at MSKCC, how to navigate our website, how to get in touch
  - stathist@mskcc.org
  - https://www.linkedin.com/in/thalyanasmithvikos/
Questions? Thank you!

Why and how to consider doing a postdoc as part of your career
Research opportunities at MSKCC and in NYC
Types of career options after your postdoc
Finding postdoc opportunities
Applying for a postdoc and how to be a strong candidate
Choosing a postdoc advisor and lab
Learning about important resources at an institution (examples from MSKCC)
Utilizing supportive networks during your postdoc
Being productive and achieving your learning goals during your postdoc
Launching your career after your postdoc
Additional slides not presented
Sections of a CV

- Contact Information
- Education
- Research Experience
- Publications
- Patents
- Grants/Fellowships/Honors/Awards
- Conference Presentations
- Teaching/Mentoring Experience
- Leadership and Service
- Professional Societies
- References
Thalyana Stathis, PhD
Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center
347-555-5555 | New York, NY | stathist@mskcc.org; x@gmail.com
EDUCATION (usually first)

Heidelberg University, Heidelberg, Germany

Ph.D., Microbiology
Thesis: The role of E6 and E7 in HPV tumorigenesis

Brown University, Providence, RI

B.S., Computer Science,
Summa Cum Laude; GPA: 3.86

2014

2008
Postdoctoral Fellow

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, NYC, NY

PI: Jane Doe, MD PhD

Department: Computational and Systems Biology

Targeting TGFB as a potential cancer therapy

Identified several small molecule inhibitors of TGFB that inhibited metastasis of lung cancer cells in a mouse model. Characterized the mechanism of these inhibitors.
RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Postdoctoral Fellow
Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, NYC, NY  PI: Jane Doe, MD PhD
Department: Computational and Systems Biology  2015-Present

- Identified several small molecule inhibitors of TGFB that inhibited metastasis of lung cancer cells in a mouse model. Characterized the mechanism of these inhibitors.
- Introduced new computational techniques into lab including X, Y, and Z that were adopted by lab members.
- Initiated collaborations with biophysicists to solve structure of TGFB bound to small molecule.
- Mentored >7 students, postdocs, and technicians; two students received thesis awards.
- Updated and maintained lab safety protocols and ensured 100% compliance.
FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS (list if you are PI or Co-PI)

K99/R00 Fellowship 2020 - 2025
National Cancer Institute
K99 portion expires in May 2022

Damon Runyon Fellowship Award 2017 - 2020
Damon Runyon Cancer Research Foundation

President’s Fellowship 2012 - 2014
Brown University
One of two PhD students awarded $60,000 fellowship out of 300 applicants
First Author


Middle Author


TEACHING/MENTORING EXPERIENCE (can be separate)

Adjunct Professor

*Hunter College, New York, NY*

September 2016-May 2018

**Introduction to Biology Lab (Four Semesters)**

- Taught 28 undergraduate students each semester
- Used Blackboard platform to teach online portion of the course
- Average class grade on university-wide test was 10 points higher than all other sections
- Used multimedia technology such as clickers and iPhones to promote active learning

Mentor for Lia Ramos, City College of San Francisco Bridge to Bioscience intern

*Current status: Laboratory Assistant at Targene, Inc.*

Mentor for Dirja Abudji, UCSF rotation student

*Current status: Graduate student in the Cheng lab*

Mentor for Menlo Adi, UC Berkeley undergraduate student

*Current status: Graduate student in UCSF’s Biomedical Sciences program*
LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Reviewer
JBC, Nature Communications, PLOS One
2016 - Present

Conference Session Chair
Gorden Conference on DNA Repair
2018

Postdoc Symposium Poster Judge
Memorial Sloan Kettering
2017
Salutations

• Address letter to hiring committee or committee chairperson

Opening Paragraph

• Why you are writing and how you heard about the position

I am writing to apply for the tenure-track assistant professor position... I am currently a postdoctoral fellow... I am excited about the prospect of joining your institution, known for... I am very excited about this opportunity, as I share your institution’s vision to...

My extensive research experience in...would fit well with your research efforts... I look forward to the possibility of working with... with the aim to... Your institution would provide an ideal home to successfully develop my research program by...
Formula for a cover letter

Middle Paragraphs

• Past accomplishments, impact of your work, and funding
• Briefly describe future directions
• Highlight fit for program

As a postdoctoral fellow, I have developed... (cite paper). I have successfully secured extramural funding through...

My postdoctoral training has focused on... As a PhD student, I...

As a junior faculty member, I aim to develop my research program by building on my recently published work... My three main research aims to continue this work are:
Formula for a cover letter

Closing Paragraph
- Why do you want to apply to this institution
- Point to attached documents
- Thank hiring committee for consideration

I believe that my work would contribute to your institution’s goals of... especially...
I have enclosed my curriculum vitae with names of references and my research statement. Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you.
Reference Letters Content

- Their expertise; focus of their lab
- How long they have known you; your relationship history
- They have observed you excelling in your career; you are an outstanding researcher and are on your way to being a future world leader in the field
- Your accomplishments in your PhD and postdoc
- In their expert opinion, you have a bright future ahead of you because you have high-impact, intriguing and solid research questions for your research program
- You are an outstanding candidate for this position and they are confident you will excel, and you will be a good fit for the institution and will be a good colleague to department members